

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, UY

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST STORY ON URUGUAY

1. APRIL 21 WASHINGTON POST PAGE TWO STORY BY JOANNE OMANG
ENTITLED "U.S. ENVOY TO URUGUAY PROTESTS VOA STORY# IS
BEING SENT TO EMBASSY BY USIA. FIRST TWO PARAGRAPHS OF
STORY FOLLOW:

"U.S. AMBASSADOR TO URUGUAY ERNEST SIRACUSA HAS REGISTERED
'VIGOROUS OBJECTIONS' TO A VOICE OF AMERICA ACCOUNT OF
ALLEGED TORTURE IN URUGUAY, SAYING THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT
'WILL HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO RESENT' THE STORY.

"THE STORY INVOLVED A FEBRUARY REPORT BY THE GENEVA-BASED
INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS (ICJ), WHICH INVESTI-
GATES CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AROUND THE WORLD.
THE TWO-MINUTE BROADCAST BY VOA GENEVA PART-TIME CORRES-
PONDENT RICHARD KILIAN FEB. 11 CONTAINED 'EXAGGERATIONS AND
DISTORTIONS' OF THE URUGUAYAN SITUATION WHICH 'CAN ONLY BE
INJURIOUS TO OUR FRIENDS, TO OUR RELATIONS AND TO OUR
EFFORTS TO DEVELOP USEFUL INFLUENCE ON THE VERY SITUATION
COMMENTED UPON,' SIRACUSA'S CONFIDENTIAL COMPLAINT SAID."

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2. FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE WAS PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE
QUESTIONS AT THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING:

Q. IS IT TRUE THAT OUR AMBASSADOR IN MONTEVIDEO TRIED TO
CENSOR A VOICE OF AMERICA BROADCAST WHICH REPORTED THE
FINDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS ABOUT
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN URUGUAY?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON REPORTS BASED UPON LEAKED,
CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS. WE HAVE POINTED OUT ON NUMEROUS
OCCASIONS THAT UNLESS AN OFFICIAL CAN FREELY EXPRESS HIS
THOUGHTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT WE CANNOT EFFECTIVELY
CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS.

Q. WHAT EXACTLY DID THE VOICE OF AMERICA STORY SAY ABOUT
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS' REPORT ON HUMAN
RIGHTS IN URUGUAY?

A. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, I HAVE A COPY OF THE VOA STORY
IN MY OFFICE WHICH YOU CAN SEE AFTER THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

Q. WOULD YOU SAY THE USG IS SOFT-PEDALING THE HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION IN URUGUAY?

A. NO. NEITHER THE DEPARTMENT NOR AMBASSADOR SIRACUSA
HAS SOFT-PEDALED THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN URUGUAY.
U.S. OFFICIALS BOTH HERE IN WASHINGTON AND IN MONTEVIDEO
HAVE REPEATEDLY AND EMPHATICALLY MADE KNOWN TO URUGUAYAN
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS OUR HUMAN RIGHTS
CONCERNS.

WE HAVE INFORMED THEM OF SECTION 502 B OF THE FOREIGN
ASSISTANCE ACT. (DEALS WITH PROVISION TO TERMINATE
SECURITY ASSISTANCE IF A COUNTRY IS FOUND TO HAVE GROSS
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.)

WE HAVE CALLED THEIR ATTENTION TO REPORTS ON URUGUAY BY
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS.

WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE UNITED STATES REGARDS THE
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ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE SPECIFIC QUESTION OF
TORTURE AS ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN.

WE HAVE SOUGHT AND BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES THAT TORTURE IS
CONTRARY TO THE POLICY OF THE URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES AND
THAT A REVIEW OF ALL PRACTICES IS BEING CONDUCTED TO
ASSURE THAT ANY ABUSES ARE ELIMINATED AND THE POLICY
AGAINST TORTURE IS BEING CARRIED OUT.

Q. HAS THE URUGUAYAN GOVERNMENT PROTESTED THE VOA STORY?

- -

A. NO, IT HAS NOT.

Q. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE VOICE OF AMERICA? DOES THE DEPARTMENT EXERCIZE VETO POWER OVER VOA NEWSCASTS?

A. AS YOU KNOW, THE VOICE OF AMERICA IS PART OF THE U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY WHICH IS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY UNDER THE PRESIDENT. USIA RECEIVES BROAD, OVERALL POLICY GUIDANCE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT. HOWEVER, THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT GET OPERATIONALLY INVOLVED IN VOA BROADCASTING. FOR ANY DETAILS ON THAT ASPECT, YOU SHOULD ADDRESS YOUR QUESTIONS TO USIA. KISSINGER

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